



Meeting	Policing Performance Committee
Date	10 December 2024
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	Acquisitive & Retail Crime Report
Presented By	Tim Mairs, ACC Local Policing East, Police Scotland
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Yes: Appendix A - Retail Crime 4 P's Plan Appendix B - Presentation

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to update members of the Policing Performance Committee on the strategies and collaborative prevention activity relevant to acquisitive crime, with a specific focus on retail crime challenges.

The full update will be facilitated by means of a formal presentation to the Scottish Police Authority at the Policing Performance Committee on 10 December 2024.

Members are invited to consider the contents of this report and associated presentation for further discussion.

ACQUISITIVE CRIME

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Acquisitive crime is a high-volume matter accounting for a substantial number of all crimes reported in Scotland, often targeting the most vulnerable in our society. In 2023/2024, 111,596 acquisitive crimes were recorded by Police Scotland which accounted for 46.4% of all reported crime.
- 1.2 In general terms, acquisitive crimes are those in which an offender acquires or takes items from another person, so covers a number of different types of offences, including but not limited to, theft by housebreaking, theft of/from a vehicle, fraud, bogus worker crime, shoplifting and rural crime variants of fuel and livestock theft.
- 1.3 The intrusive and invasive nature of crimes such as housebreaking and the adverse impact on members of the public when their livelihoods are significantly impacted by acquisitive crime, requires a victim focused approach to ensure a high quality of service delivery on every occasion an acquisitive crime occurs.
- 1.4 The national strategic assessment 2023/2028, identified acquisitive crime as a substantial operational policing priority but proportionately tackling acquisitive crime represents a challenge for police and partners.
- 1.5 Effective long-term reductions in acquisitive crime levels requires a multifaceted prevention approach across a wide range of statutory and third sector partners, as well as some commercial entities.

2. POLICE SCOTLAND ACQUISITIVE CRIME PORTFOLIO

- 2.1 ACC Tim Mairs is the dedicated strategic lead for acquisitive crime. Further governance and assurance is provided through the revised Police Scotland Performance Board and our Performance Framework. The Police Scotland force, regional and divisional tasking boards provide a tactical response that promotes effective local responses and collaborative working.
- 2.2 As with other crime types, the methodologies used to commit certain types of acquisitive crime, namely fraud, are rapidly evolving with the advent of new technologies.
- 2.3 While fraud and robbery are considered acquisitive crimes, they are managed under the portfolios of ACC Freeburn and ACC Sutherland



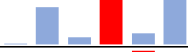

respectively. This is due to their inextricable link to both cyber-crime and violence.



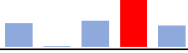

- 2.4 A Local Policing Detective Superintendent has been appointed as the national acquisitive crime tactical lead. The Detective Superintendent is assisted by three Detective Chief Inspectors at a regional level, who provide the coordinated response the national approach requires, while ensuring divisions are supported at a local level.
- 2.5 The National Rural, Acquisitive and Business Prevention Team (RAB-PT), and the National Acquisitive Crime Group (NACG) - which includes key non-police partners - provide support and coordination in relation to the preventative, protective and preparedness aspects of acquisitive crime, as well as an intelligence led focus on identifying crime trends and ensuring appropriate responses are developed to the highest tariff offending.
- 2.6 Appreciating the importance of a partnership approach to achieve positive long-lasting outcomes, the Scottish Partnership Against Acquisitive Crime (SPAACE), of which Police Scotland are a key member, has developed an Acquisitive Crime Strategy 2023-2028. The strategy outlines how we will collectively work in partnership to tackle acquisitive crime throughout Scotland. The vision is to prevent acquisitive crime having an impact on our communities and the aim is to work with partners to reduce the opportunities for acquisitive crime.
- 2.7 The strategy is prevention focused, covering the themes of theft (including theft by shoplifting), itinerant doorstep crime, illicit trade, vehicle crime, robbery, housebreaking and fraud.
- 2.8 Support for SPAACE (specifically in relation to retail crime) is contained within the 'Scottish Government (SG) Programme for Government 2024 – 2025: Serving Scotland' under the Ensuring High Quality and Sustainable Public Services priority.
- 2.9 Recognising the importance and impact of rural crime in Scotland, Police Scotland is a key partner within the Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (SPARC), who have developed a Rural Crime Strategy 2022-2025, which has a vision to ensure, regardless of geographic location, rural communities feel safe, with the aim of protecting rural communities through strong partnerships.
- 2.10 Police Scotland are also contributors to Operation Opal, which is a national intelligence unit focused on serious organised acquisitive

crime (SOAC) where there is a series of offences impacting on two or more police force areas, including Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Opal team is a functional responsibility of the National Police Chief’s Council (NPCC) under the wider Crime Operations Coordination Committee.

3. KEY INSIGHTS – ACQUISITIVE CRIME

3.1 Utilising data from the end of Quarter 2 of the 2024 – 2025 reporting period, acquisitive crime continues to increase compared to the previous year (up 3.2%) and the five-year mean (up 13.9%). It should be noted that the five-year mean has been affected by the COVID-19 period where there was a significant decrease in the number of acquisitive crimes recorded. Comparing the first year before COVID-19 (2019/20) the current figures are slightly increased (1437 more, up 2.5%).

Recorded YTD Comparison	PYTD	YTD	% Change	Six-Month Sparkline
Group 3 Crimes of Dishonesty	56,290	58,116	↑ 3.2%	
Housebreaking (incl. Attempts) - Total	4,613	3,831	↓ -17.0%	
Motor Vehicle Crime - Total	6,183	5,644	↓ -8.7%	
Theft by Shoplifting	19,201	22,806	↑ 18.8%	

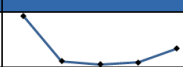
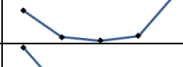
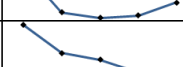

Recorded Five-year Comparison	Five-Year Mean	YTD	% Change	Five-Year Sparkline
Group 3 Crimes of Dishonesty	51,010.0	58,116	↑ 13.9%	
Housebreaking (incl. Attempts) - Total	4,933.2	3,831	↓ -22.3%	
Motor Vehicle Crime - Total	5,946.8	5,644	↓ -5.1%	
Theft by Shoplifting	14,210.4	22,806	↑ 60.5%	

3.2 Although there can be no exact comparison to the rest of the UK given the different crime types and crime recording methods, according to the ‘Office for National Statistic – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2024’, police recorded theft increased by 3% when compared to the year ending March 2023.

3.3 Operation Opal data from their Quarter 3 report for 2024, which relates to specific crime types linked to Serious Organised Acquisitive Crime (SOAC), and excludes data from the Metropolitan Police, indicates that between July and September 2024, these crime types rose by 4.7% compared to the previous quarter and by 13.9% when compared to the same period in 2023. Therefore,

there would appear to be similar trends for acquisitive crime across the UK.

- 3.4 In relation to the Police Scotland Quarter 2 data contained in the tables above, if Theft by Shoplifting is removed from the overall Acquisitive crime total there is a decrease of 1,779 crimes (down 4.8%) compared to the previous year. Aside from Theft by Shoplifting, which has risen by 18.8% compared to the previous year, there have also been significant increases in Attempted Theft of a Motor Vehicle (62 more crimes, up 24.7%) and Opening Lockfast Places (not motor vehicle) which increased by 135 crimes (up 20.2%).
- 3.5 Despite the overall increase in Acquisitive crime there were decreases in Overall Housebreaking crimes, which decreased by 782 crimes (down 17.0%), Opening Lockfast Places (motor vehicle), down 214 crimes (8.7%) and in Theft from a Motor Vehicle, insecure, which decreased by 213 (down 9.8%). This means 1,209 less people were victims of crime.
- 3.6 Detection rates for acquisitive crime have broadly increased, with only retail crime showing a slight reduction. This is clear evidence of Police Scotland’s commitment to pursuing offenders and bringing them to justice.

Recorded Detection Rate Comparison	PYTD	YTD	% Point Change	Five-Year Sparkline
Group 3 Crimes of Dishonesty	31.7%	34.3%	↑ 2.6%	
Housebreaking (incl. Attempts) - Total	27.6%	33.7%	↑ 6.1%	
Motor Vehicle Crime - Total	28.4%	31.5%	↑ 3.1%	
Theft by Shoplifting	48.3%	48.1%	↓ -0.2%	

3.7 Vehicle Crime

Motor vehicle crime has decreased compared to the previous year (539 fewer, down 8.7%) and compared to the five-year mean (303 fewer, down 5.1%). There has been a significant decrease in motor vehicle crime compared to the pre-COVID-19 period, with 1,232 (down 17.9%) fewer crimes. The only crime under this grouping which has increased compared to the previous year is Attempt Theft of Motor Vehicle which has observed an increase of 62 crimes (up 24.7%). Detections for motor vehicle crimes have slightly increased by 1.1%.

- 3.8 To increase our understanding of vehicle crime in Scotland and use analytical products to inform future activity, intelligence analysis in the form of a national overview into the theft of motor vehicles between 1 April 2023 and 25 September 2024 was undertaken. This identified success in terms of the volume of this crime type (decrease of 4.9%), highlighting that proactive policing, community engagement and vital partnership working was key to the reductions.
- 3.9 The identified areas for future focus relate to organised criminals utilising the 'keyless theft' modus operandi, exploiting emerging technology to steal high value vehicles from driveways via a 'relay' device. Working with partners, including vehicle manufacturers will therefore be given due emphasis in the forthcoming period
- 3.10 The analysis further identified that while theft of vehicles had reduced, attempted thefts of vehicles had increased. One possible explanation for this is that continuous partnership working, public engagement and campaigns means members of the public are becoming more aware of deterrence tactics and are utilising tools such as faraday bags, surveillance systems such as ring cameras, and wheel locks that may be preventing offenders from successfully taking and driving off with the vehicle. Therefore, these campaigns will be enhanced and used in future years.
- 3.11 Lastly, it was identified that nearly half of all vehicle crimes were perpetrated by persons known to the victim, therefore continued focus on dealing with vulnerabilities and exploitation will be required.
- 3.12 **Housebreaking**
- Housebreaking (including attempts) has decreased compared to the previous year (782 fewer, down 17.0%) and compared to the five-year mean (1102 fewer, down 22.3%).
Detections for housebreaking have increased substantially by 6.1%.
- 3.13 Despite these notable decreases in housebreaking crimes, the impact of this invasive and intrusive crime, means that supporting victims is a key factor, while providing positive outcomes in terms of detections, can go some way to giving victims peace of mind.
- 3.14 Through the NACG structures, the coordinated response to high tariff offenders and organised crime groups committing housebreaking crimes is managed and progressed. A range of intelligence-led national operations allow for the sharing of

information, recognise specific modus operandi, pool resources and provide coordinated leadership to ensure a cohesive response to crimes committed across multiple local policing divisions.

3.15 Despite the successes these operations bring in terms of bringing significant offenders to justice, the key to public confidence and safety is to work with partners to prevent housebreaking crimes occurring in the first place. RAB-PT provide national products to assist with crime prevention materials and campaigns, while local policing divisions utilise their local TT&CG processes and associated analytical products to identify trends and hotspots and target preventative campaigns at the correct time, in the correct location and with the correct people. For example, divisions will have preventative campaigns in October / November when housebreaking crimes are more likely due to changing of the clocks and increased hours of darkness.

3.16 **Rural Crime**

The theft of rural farm machinery, tools, fuel and livestock can have devastating impacts for rural businesses that rely on the machinery for their livelihood. SPARC (the multi-agency partnership led approach to tackling rural crime in Scotland across 7 rural crime priorities) has developed extensive ties with northern English police forces and the UK Rural crime team to combat the transient nature of rural acquisitive crime and several operations and national preventions are in place to target this criminality from a pursue element.

3.17 Chaired by Police Scotland it involves over 20 organisations with aligned action plans to the 7 priorities to mitigate and reduce rural crime. The partnership meets in person quarterly to review national and regional prevention work and that the action plans in place remain effective and measurable.

3.18 As part of the ongoing partnership response, the following are examples of initiatives being undertaken:

- **Operation Hawkeye** is an intelligence led partnership between Police Scotland and several English Police forces sharing intelligence on those committing cross-border rural acquisitive crime, identifying offenders and recovering stolen property. The sharing of live time intelligence and bulletins has resulted in numerous offenders being arrested and property recovered.

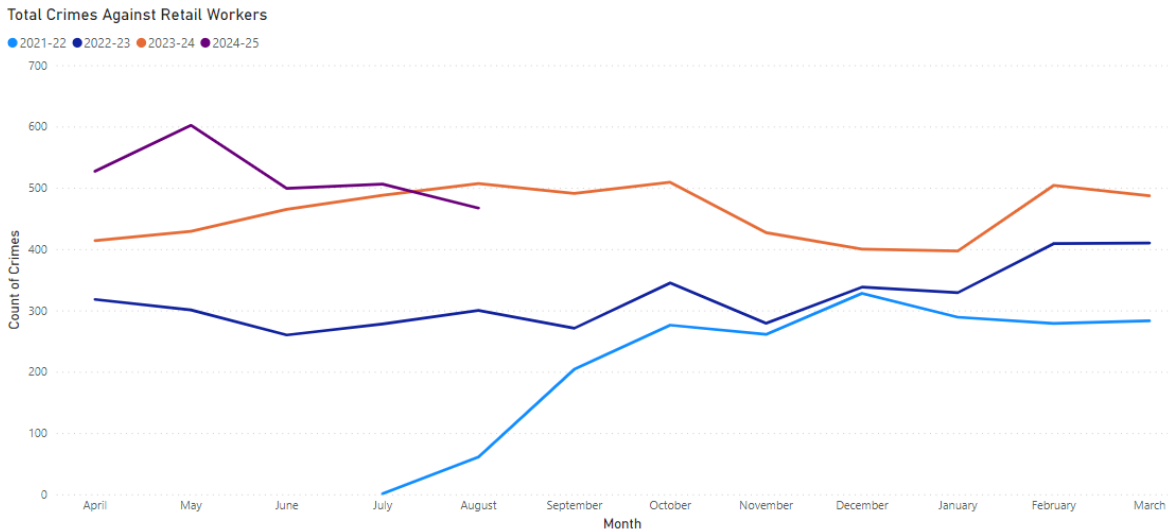
- **Rural Watch Scotland** is a partnership with Neighbourhood Watch Scotland and through engagement and promotion with rural communities, via SPARC, has over 10,000 users across Rural Scotland who receive live time updates on rural crimes specific to their communities and alerts on crime trends and hot spots to allow fast track safeguarding.
- **The National Rural Machinery Sticker Scheme** provides rural community members with stickers, which when affixed to rural machinery directs Police resources when on patrol to stop/check rural machinery if seen on the road between certain hours, targeting the theft of machinery out with farming hours and their transport on the road networks cross border.
- Ongoing promotion of vehicle and machinery trackers via the **Police Crime Prevention Initiative (PCPI)** approved products within Secured by Design catalogue which is dovetailed with Police training on tracking and tracing rural machinery.

4. KEY INSIGHTS – RETAIL CRIME

- 4.1 Shoplifting crimes continue to be the main contributor to the increase in Acquisitive Crime and are now at higher levels than those seen pre-pandemic, with Retailers Against Crime (RAC) highlighting an increase in high-value thefts alongside escalations to violence.
- Crimes of shoplifting account for 39.2% of all acquisitive crime and are continuing the upwards trends observed in the previous two years.
 - 22,806 shoplifting crimes have been recorded YTD, an increase of 18.8% year-to-date and up 60.5% on the 5 year mean
 - Shoplifting crimes have increased by 6,618 (up 40.9%) compared to the pre-COVID-19 year of 2019/20
 - The detection rate for theft by shoplifting sits at 48.1%, down 0.2 percentage points compared to the same period last year, this is despite an increase in detections YTD, rising 18.3% (1,697 detections) to 10,963.
- 4.2 In addition to the increase in shoplifting crimes, violence against retail workers is also a matter of note. In 2021 new legislation in the form of the Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-related Goods

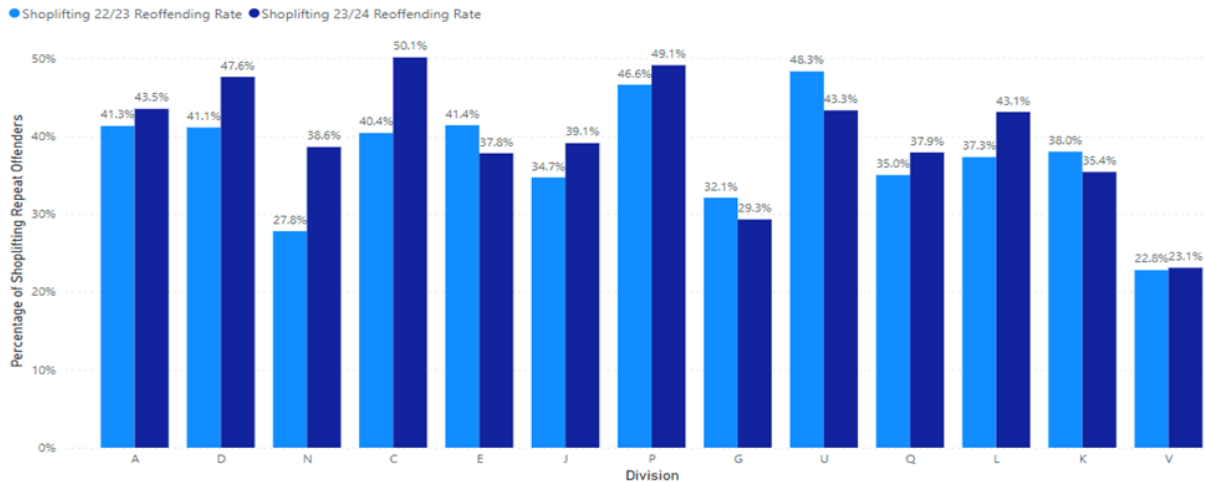
and Services) (Scotland) Act 2021, was brought into effect in Scotland specific to crimes committed against retail workers.

- 4.3 When the new offences were introduced in 2021, the numbers gradually increased month-on-month between August and December as awareness of the new offences increased. The crimes from 2023-24 and 2024-25 are still increasing but are showing signs of plateauing.



- 4.4 The rise in retail crime across Scotland is replicated across the UK. Figures provided by Operation Opal indicate the rise in shoplifting crimes is equally, if not more, pronounced when UK figures are considered.
- 4.5 Operation Opal data indicates that during Quarter 3 (July 2024 – September 2024) there has been a 29% increase in England and Wales when compared against Q3 in 2023. Q3 2024 levels are also 7% up on Q2 2024, indicating offences are still rising.
- 4.6 There are assessed to be a number of interconnected key drivers resulting in the increase in retail crime.
- 4.7 36.7% of shoplifting offenders have committed more than one crime of shoplifting in the current FYTD period, an increase of 1.2 percentage points compared to the last year. Shoplifting repeat offenders make up 54.8% of all Group 3 repeat offenders.

2023/24 Percentage of Shoplifting Reoffenders by Division

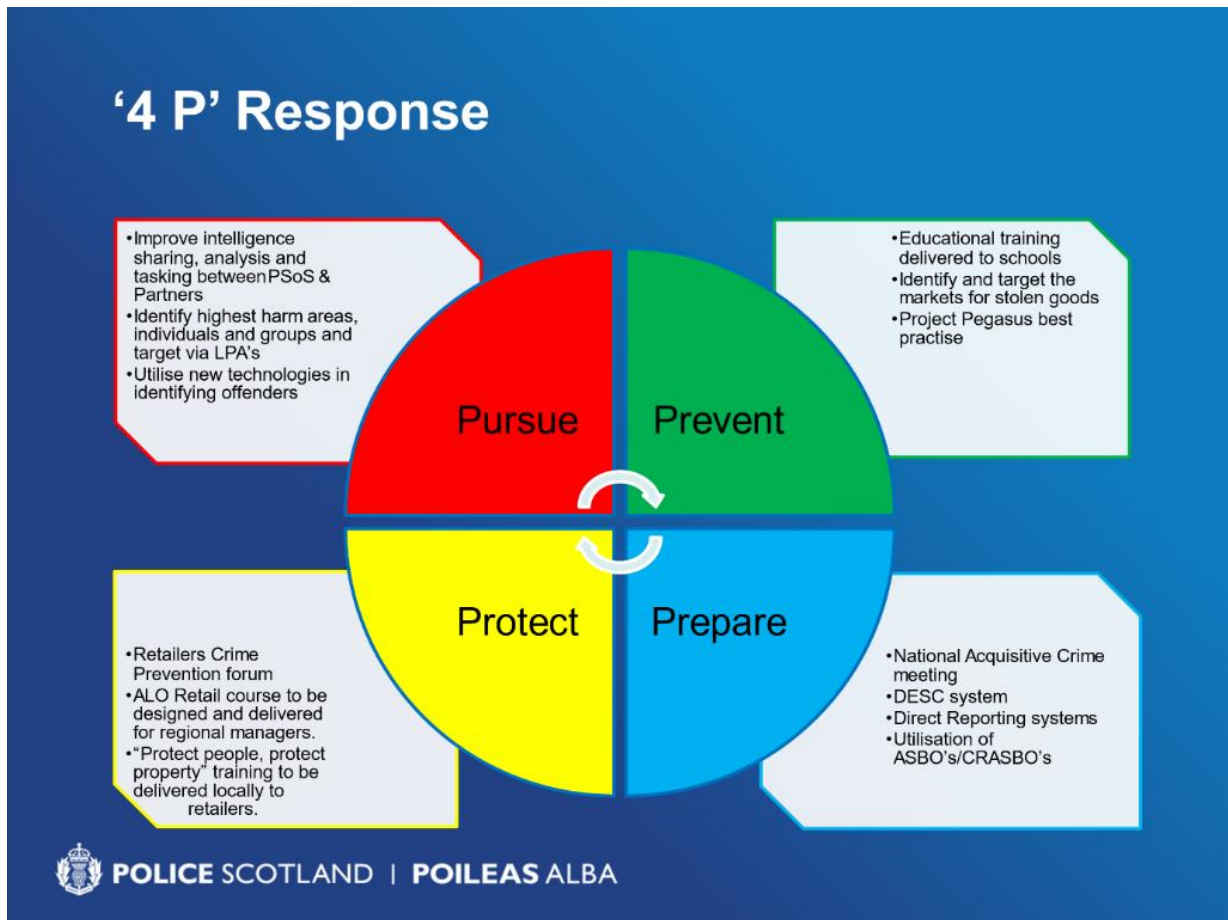


4.8 As evidenced by the UK wide increases in shoplifting crime highlighted in the Operation Opal data, Police Scotland are not unique in managing the rises in retail crime. Changes in the retail environment such as self-service tills, less staff (including security staff), product placement and 'non-confrontation' policies are UK wide procedures and are considered to have an adverse impact on shoplifting levels.

- 4.9 The increasing cost of living, driven by fluctuations in market prices, and supply chain pressures caused by political instability are all likely drivers, with the resulting high demand, domestically and internationally, for stolen items and cheaper products making shoplifting an appealing venture.
- 4.10 This could particularly apply to those under the age of criminal responsibility and under 25 who will be aware of potential criminal justice outcomes for shoplifting and see it as a low risk/high reward crime. (Evidence provides that in the last five years there has been an increase in the number of under 18's named as the accused in theft by shoplifting crimes. In 2023/24, 663 13-year-olds were named as the 'accused' in theft by shoplifting crimes, an increase of 61% (n=313) in comparison to 2019/2020.)
- 4.11 There is also a realistic possibility that organised criminals are recruiting under 18's to carry out shoplifting offences for them and the continued issues of young person's being pressured into shoplifting are ever present. The introduction of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024, does however provide opportunities to work with our young people and improve their life outcomes.
- 4.12 Based upon the increasing prevalence of retail crime and recognising where Police Scotland and partners can have an impact on these key drivers, Police Scotland have adopted a 4P approach and introduced a Retail Crime 4 P's Plan (as per Appendix A).

5. 4P APPROACH TO RETAIL CRIME

- 5.1 To provide a holistic response tackling retail crime in all its forms, the 4P approach has been developed in support of the Retail Crime 4 P's Plan. The following image shows some of the ongoing efforts in furtherance of this strategy.



5.2 Some of the highlights in relation to the 4P approach are as follows:

5.3 **Pursue** – In August 2024, through the correlation of local policing teams in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Fife, Tayside and the North East, an organised crime group was identified as responsible for 32 crimes of shoplifting amounting to a loss of nearly £50,000 from supermarket retailers. The offenders have been reported to the Crown Office and Procurators Fiscal Service (COPFS).

5.4 **Prepare** – In September 2024, Police Scotland in conjunction with Retailers Against Crime (RAC) launched a proof of concept (POC) in Fife Division, to improve and streamline the reporting mechanism for retail crime, while enhancing information sharing between businesses and Police. Utilising a system known as SentrySIS, this allows retailers to directly report crimes to Police Scotland, providing statements and images of potential suspects. This increases efficiencies in the system, with retailers not having to utilise the 101 system and Police Officers not having to attend retail premises to obtain details of the crime report, thus allowing them to focus on perpetrators and improve detection rates. A full evaluation

of the POC will be completed in 2025 before the next steps are decided.

- 5.5 **Prevent** - Police Scotland and Retailers Against Crime (RAC) are progressing an education package for school aged children. The aim is to increase understanding and reduce offending by young persons and the package will be rolled out at engagement days in primary and secondary schools by the Children and Young Persons (CYP) engagement team.
- 5.6 **Protect** - In recognising that violence can accompany instances of shoplifting, de-escalation and lone worker training has been developed and will be delivered by Police Scotland RAB-PT unit to regional prevention teams to deliver 'on the ground' to local retail workers in hot spot areas. Additionally, a retail crime course (aligned with Architecture Liaison Officer functions) is being developed to provide retailers with the skills to design out crime from retail premises and cascade this training internally within their own retail companies.
- 5.7 Continuing to deliver upon the 4P approach to retail crime will involve collaboration with key partners and a whole system approach to recognise and account for the social complexities driving the current increases in prevalence. RAC are already a close and established partner who are committed to working with Police and other SPAACE partners to find lasting solutions to retail crime. As part of this collaboration, they recently invited ACC Mairs to be a keynote speaker at their Annual Conference as we jointly attempt to understand the issues driving retail crime and consider joint initiatives to reduce the impact on retailers and wider society.
- 5.8 As part of this joint approach, Police Scotland aim to improve detection rates through improving analysis, focusing upon high tariff recidivist offenders, priority hotspots and organised crime groups, while preventing the exploitation of children, but this is not an issue where enforcement alone will lead to the issues abating.
- 5.9 The key actions moving forward are
- to improve our collaboration with Operation Opal which provides intelligence products for retail crime across the UK, it being recognised that offenders from elsewhere are travelling to commit crime in Scotland,
 - to streamline the reporting mechanisms and reduce bureaucracy in reporting crime and sharing information,

- to engage with our children and young people, supported by the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024, to protect our children, highlight the impact of shoplifting activities and prevent their exploitation,
- to work with retailers to target harden their premises and design out crime, and
- develop the SPAACE partnership and acquisitive crime strategy in the retail crime context to maximise the partnership benefits and whole system response.

5.10 Furthermore, to continue the roll out of the 4P approach and develop connectivity and cohesion between the national strategy and local delivery, plans are being considered for a three-site pilot, utilising divisions with urban areas and pronounced increases in retail crime. The aim will be to cascade toolkits, communications packages and other relevant information to encourage use of best practice, while simultaneously capturing the successes divisions have in their own local activities. This is with the aim of completing the learning cycle and reducing the harm caused by retail crime.

6. DEVELOPING OUR APPROACH TO ACQUISITIVE CRIME

- 6.1 In a very similar vein to that for retail crime, the overall approach to tackling acquisitive crime has prevention as its foundation. The continued development of the 4P approach across the wider acquisitive crime portfolio will provide increased focus and impetus across the portfolio with the preventions and partnership engagement mapped via a dedicated SPAACE dashboard.
- 6.2 The vast majority of acquisitive crime (even if cross border) is managed by local policing divisions and the ongoing aim is to support them in their delivery of their policing priorities by capturing best practice across Scotland and the UK and providing advice, guidance and toolkits to assist them in achieving the best possible outcomes.
- 6.3 Working with SPAACE partners, there will be meaningful, coordinated engagement at all levels to agree on the introduction and progression of shared action plans aligned to the acquisitive crime priorities ensuring they are monitored, reviewed and measured, with key milestones built in.
- 6.4 As part of this partnership approach, we aim to share information and improve our understanding of the acquisitive crime picture nationwide by enhancing our intelligence and analysis products.

- 6.5 The continued roll out of the DESC project across Scotland will provide increased opportunities to work with partners to report crime and share information more readily and reduce the bureaucracy involved for police officers, thus allowing a proactive perpetrator and preventative focus.
- 6.6 Finally, the continuing evolution of Operation Evolve, will provide increased resilience and support to the front line, allowing more proactive and preventative operations and strategies to be developed by front line officers in local divisions, targeting those high tariff recidivist offenders and organised criminals who are causing the most harm in communities with their criminal activities.

7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 Whilst recognising the wider societal issues at play, Police Scotland will continue to tackle acquisitive crime through a coordinated and focussed approach that ensures our communities are safe and supported. We will prioritise working closely across the SPAACE and SPARC partnerships while supporting local divisions in their Local Community Planning Partnerships to address the needs and priorities of local communities.
- 7.2 Finally, we will continue to support local divisions and RAB-PT in identifying, testing and embedding good practice.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

11. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are reputational implications in this report. We are aware of the importance to maintain the trust and confidence of our communities and reputational impact to Police Scotland.

12. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are social implications in this report. As stated above violence is a cross-cutting issue and can have a profound and lasting effect on individuals, families and communities.

13. COMMUNITY IMPACT

13.1 There are no community implications in this report.

14. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are equality implications in this report. We continue to monitor equality implications through the Violence ASB and Stop and Search Working Groups where data allows and act accordingly.

15. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to consider the contents of this report and associated presentation for further discussion.

APPENDIX A

What does success look like?

<p>STRA 2023-28 RECOMMENDATION:</p> <p>30. To develop our analytical and investigative capabilities, take organisational learning from the ongoing work of established acquisitive crime units, considering the possibilities for enhancing the force wide approach to all forms of acquisitive crime, and the communities it effects.</p>	<p>ASSESSED STATUS (RAG):</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>KEY DELIVERABLES:</p> <p>Acquisitive Crime continues to pose a significant threat to Scottish individuals, businesses, and communities. The National Strategic Assessment 2023/2028 identified Acquisitive Crime as a Substantial Operational Policing Priority.</p> <p>Retail crimes continue to be the main contributor to the increase in Acquisitive Crime and are now at higher levels than those seen pre-pandemic, with Retailers against Crime highlighting an increase in high-value thefts alongside escalations to violence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve community safety by disrupting serious organised crime groups, reducing violence against retail staff.• Prevent children from being exploited to commit retail crime.• Enhance access to crime prevention advice and embed processes with retailers.
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31. Considering the cross-border and international element of acquisitive crime, engage with and strengthen existing partnerships with external agencies to allow for greater intelligence gathering, sharing of best practise, and collaborative working

Ongoing

- Improve the analysis of acquisitive crime statistics across Scotland to identify priority groups, hotspots and provide clear actionable product within the acquisitive crime management structure for dissemination and action at an LPA level.
- Identify new ways of sharing information with retailers to proactively target priority shoplifters in an efficient, agile manner and utilise existing information systems within the retail sector to enhance PSoS capability to target priority groups and offenders.
- SPAACE Strategy - Develop a recurring, structured meeting of the SPAACE strategy and partners with PSoS to share best practise and drive the key elements of this Control strategy.

RETAIL CRIME – CONTROL STRATEGY

How well are we achieving success?

<p>PURSUE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve community safety by disrupting serious organised crime groups and reducing violence against retail staff. • Improve the analysis of acquisitive crime statistics across Scotland to identify priority groups, hotspots and provide clear actionable product within the acquisitive crime management structure for dissemination and action at an LPA level.	<p>RESULTS: (what – how)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue positive use of the Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-related Goods and Services) Scotland Act 2021 to pursue offenders.• Promote the use of ASBO/CRASBO along with bail conditions to protect the retailers and wider community from further offending.• Ensure impact statements are provided to COPFS following national guidelines <u>Impact Statement for Business (ISB) (nbcc.police.uk)</u>• NPCC Guidance on retail crime as part of Operation Pegasus will be replicated if not already being carried out in Scotland. • APU developing snap shots on retail crime hot spots and prolific offenders for each region N/E/W to incorporate into tasking and patrol matrix within local policing.• Support NIB with developing information sharing ability between PSoS and PND to better inform Op OPAL SOAC products with a Scottish picture. Ensuring PSoS achieves best value for money from OPAL engagement.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify new ways of sharing information with retailers to proactively target priority shoplifters in an efficient, agile manner and utilise existing information systems within the retail sector to enhance PSoS capability to target priority groups and offenders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain actionable product from OPAL/Project Pegasus on Scottish priority crime groups/offenders and feed this into the National Acquisitive Crime Group structure for enforcement.• DESC (Digital Evidence Sharing Capability) – National Pilot project streamlining digital CCTV evidence gathering and authentication direct from shopfloor to court room reducing repeated Police visits and freeing up frontline resources.• Direct Reporting – Ongoing pilot project within Fife of IT Systems to enable direct reporting of non-ongoing shopliftings direct to Police reducing repeated Police visits and freeing up frontline resources.
<p>PREVENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevent children from being exploited to commit retail crime.• Retail premises – ‘Protecting People and Property’.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver training on the impact of retail crime with RAC, CYP and RAB-PT to school aged children.• Develop peer-to-peer sessions for PSYV to deliver in schools and youth groups.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop technological solutions to identify and target the avenues for reset of stolen property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• De-escalation skills awareness to be delivered via Retailers Forum by business preventions team direct to retailers and refreshed Crime Prevention material to be shared internally/externally with partners.• Architecture Liaison Office (ALO) key guidance provided direct to retailers on 'Target Hardening' of retail premises to 'Design out crime'.• Data Scientist work ongoing in relation to 3rd party marketplaces, identifying stolen property and highlighting opportunities for interventions and enforcement.
<p>PREPARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retail Strand of SPAACE - Develop a recurring, structured meeting of Retail Crime and partners with PSoS to share best practise and drive the key elements of this Control strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current Retailers Forum to be redesigned under SPAACE with aligned ToR and action log for Crime prevention within the retail area.• Identify and agree achievable short/medium and long-term goals for retail crime as part of the SPAACE strategy with partner.• Utilise the recurring structured meeting of SPAACE to discuss/monitor the progress of these priorities and

	revisit/align to ensure the goals are achievable and being achieved.
PROTECT <ul style="list-style-type: none">Enhance access to crime prevention advise and embed processes with retailers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Retailer’s forum to be action focused and use network to deliver training sessions covering crime prevention measures to install in stores.Extend crime prevention training courses at SPC to retailer’s loss prevention managers to ensure early target hardening and CP investment is considered from store development to daily business.At senior level continue to encourage and promote crime prevention investment as best practise.



Police Scotland

Acquisitive Crime

Policing Performance Committee

10 December 2024



Acquisitive Crime

Definition

Where an offender acquires or takes items from another person, including but not limited to, theft by housebreaking, theft of/from a vehicle, bogus worker crime, shoplifting and rural crime variants of fuel and livestock theft.

Context

The national strategic assessment 2023/2028, identified acquisitive crime as a **substantial** operational policing priority.

In 2023/2024, 111,596 acquisitive crimes were recorded by Police Scotland which accounted for **46.4%** of all reported crime.

Acquisitive Crime – Key Insights

Acquisitive Crime – Key Insights

Recorded YTD Comparison	PYTD	YTD	% Change
Group 3 Crimes of Dishonesty	56,290	58,116	↑ 3.2%
Housebreaking (incl. Attempts) - Total	4,613	3,831	↓ -17.0%
Motor Vehicle Crime - Total	6,183	5,644	↓ -8.7%
Theft by Shoplifting	19,201	22,806	↑ 18.8%

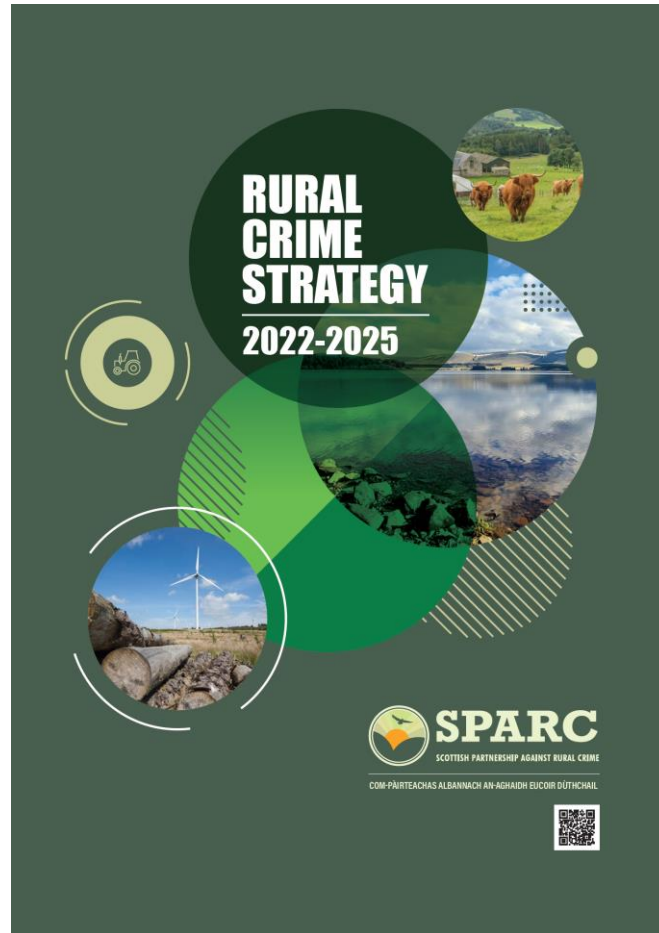
Recorded Five-year Comparison	Five-Year Mean	YTD	% Change
Group 3 Crimes of Dishonesty	51,010.0	58,116	↑ 13.9%
Housebreaking (incl. Attempts) - Total	4,933.2	3,831	↓ -22.3%
Motor Vehicle Crime - Total	5,946.8	5,644	↓ -5.1%
Theft by Shoplifting	14,210.4	22,806	↑ 60.5%

Recorded Detection Rate Comparison	PYTD	YTD	% Point Change
Group 3 Crimes of Dishonesty	31.7%	34.3%	↑ 2.6%
Housebreaking (incl. Attempts) - Total	27.6%	33.7%	↑ 6.1%
Motor Vehicle Crime - Total	28.4%	31.5%	↑ 3.1%
Theft by Shoplifting	48.3%	48.1%	↓ -0.2%

Acquisitive Crime – Key Insights

- Rises in acquisitive crime across the UK
- ***Theft of Motor Vehicles***
- Emerging crime types – keyless thefts
- The perpetrator was known to nearly half of all victims of vehicle theft
- ***Housebreaking***
- The role of Mobile Organised Crime Groups
- Specific modus operandi, coordinated and cohesive response
- High level of repeat and persistent offending

Rural Acquisitive Crime – SPARC



LPARC's - Building Effective Local Partnerships within SPARC

- Angus
- Argyll and Bute
- Ayrshire
- Dumfries and Galloway
- East Lothian
- Falkirk
- Fife
- Greater Glasgow
- Highlands
- Lanarkshire



- Loch Lomond & Trossachs
- Mid Lothian
- Northeast
- Pentland Hills
- Perth & Kinross
- Renfrewshire & Inverclyde
- Scottish Borders
- West Lothian
- Whitelee

Retail Crime

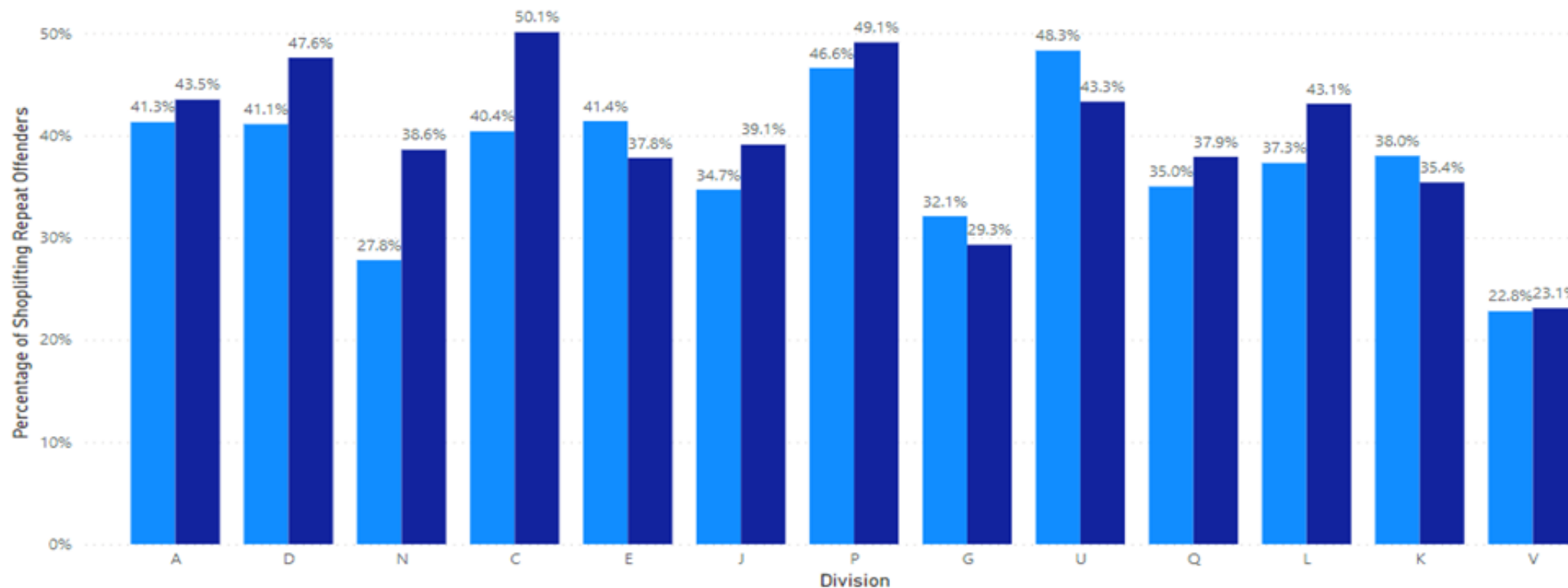
Retail Crime – Key Insights

- Crimes of shoplifting account for **39.2%** of all acquisitive crime.
- **22,806** shoplifting crimes have been recorded YTD, **an increase of 18.8%**
- Operation Opal data indicates that during Quarter 3 there has been a **29% increase in England and Wales** when compared against Q3 in 2023.
- Shoplifting crimes increased by **6,618 (up 40.9%)** compared to the pre-COVID-19 year of 2019/20.
- The detection rate for theft by shoplifting is **48.1%, down 0.2%** compared to the same period last year this is despite an increase in detections YTD, rising 18.3% (1,697 detections) to 10,963.

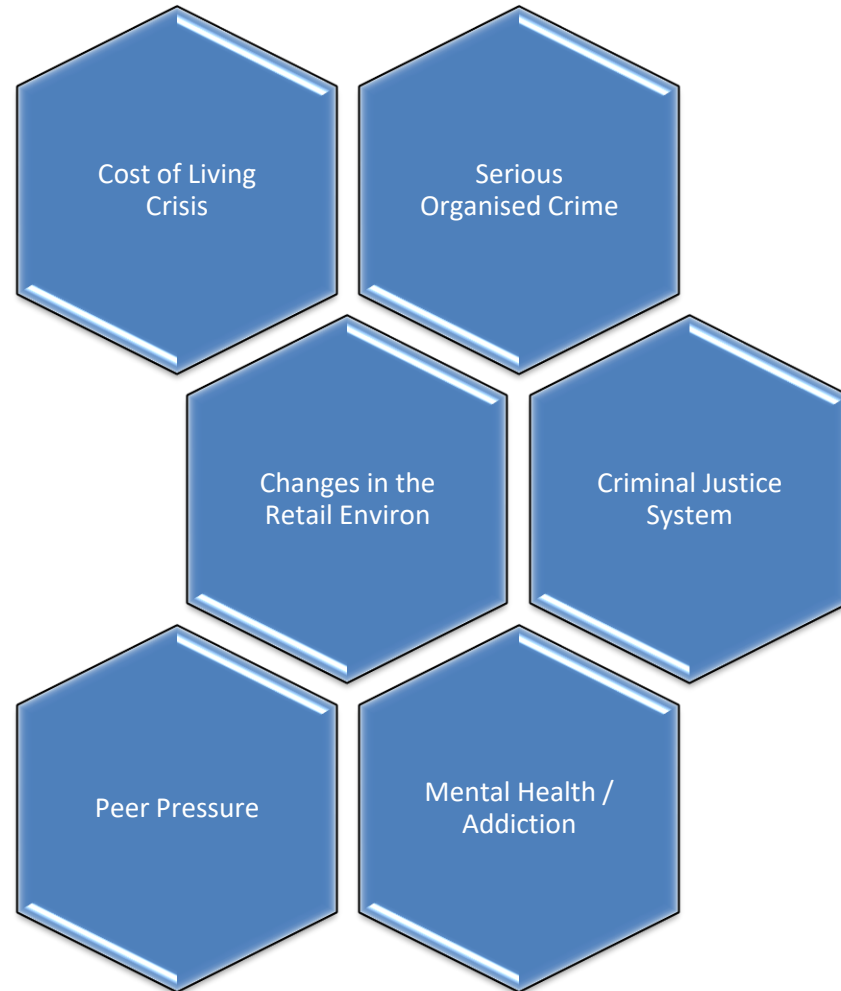
Acquisitive Crime – Key Insights

2023/24 Percentage of Shoplifting Reoffenders by Division

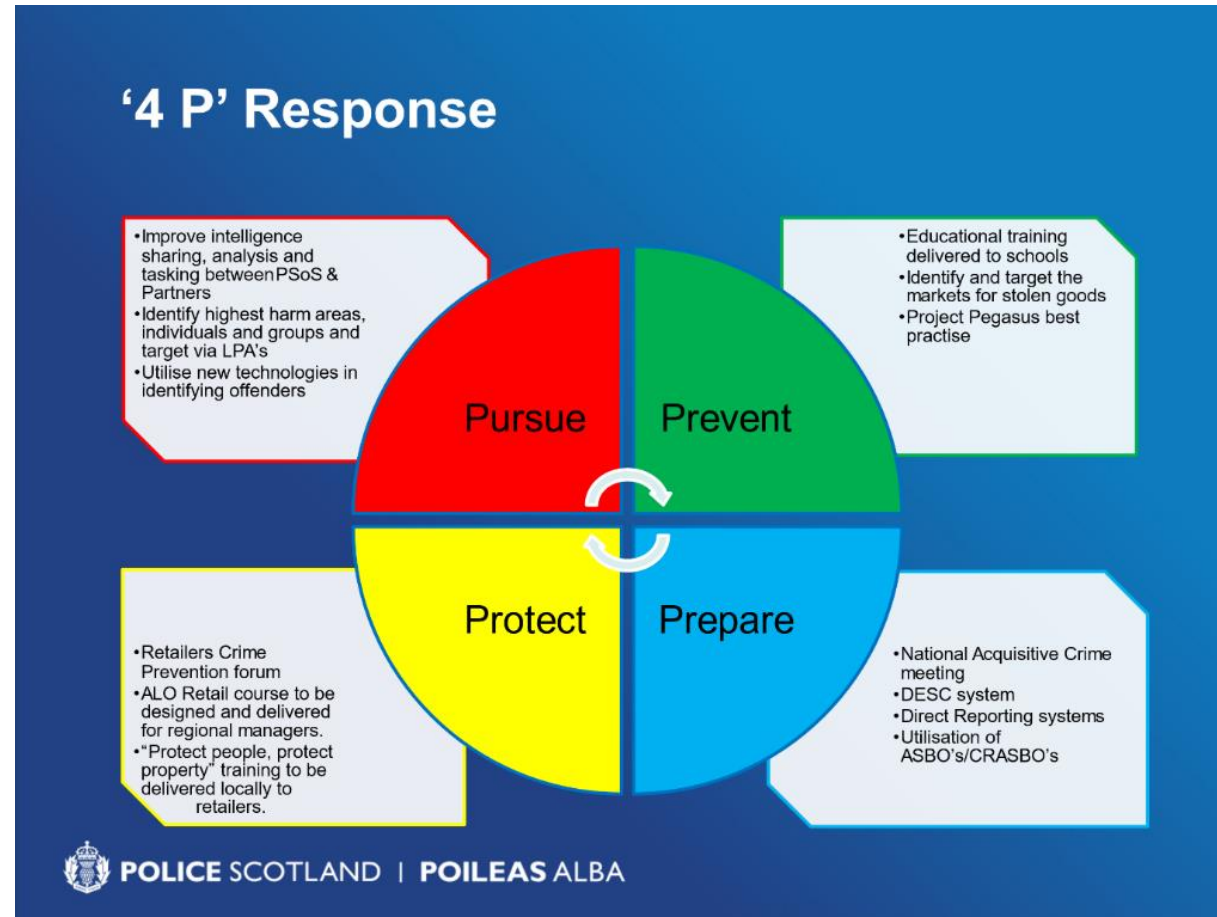
● Shoplifting 22/23 Reoffending Rate ● Shoplifting 23/24 Reoffending Rate



Retail Crime - Key Drivers



Retail Crime – 4P Approach



Retail Crime – Future Activities

- **Pursue** - High Tariff offender, priority hotspots, organised crime groups, improve analysis, work with Operation Opal
- **Prepare** - Streamline reporting mechanisms, reduce bureaucracy
- **Prevent** - Engage with our children and young people, investment in community policing
- **Protect** - 'Target harden' premises
- Relationship with partners – Retailers Against Crime
- Develop the SPAACE strategy
- 3 site pilot

A Joined-Up Approach to Acquisitive Crime

Acquisitive Crime – SPAACE



Crime prevention is about understanding and addressing both the cause and the crime. It is:

Any intervention which prevents or reduces a crime that would have occurred without that intervention;



Police and partners working together with communities, learning about shared problems, and jointly designing unique solutions;

When we initiate crime responses before there is a significant problem as opposed to reacting to crime matters on an incident by incident basis



Vision

Prevent acquisitive crime having an impact on our communities



Aim

Work with our partners to reduce the opportunities for acquisitive crime



Objectives

- **Minimise opportunities for acquisitive crime** and reduce the harm it causes to our communities
- Develop our nationwide approach to **reduce doorstep crime** and the harm it causes
- Work with partners to tackle acquisitive crime and **protect individuals and businesses** from this threat
- Deliver a **clearer reporting mechanism** for advice and guidance
- Build upon **community and business resilience**

Acquisitive Crime – Next Steps

- SPAACE Dashboard
- Best practice, guidance, toolkits
- Partnership Action Plans – Future SPAACE meeting (Feb 2025)
- Intelligence and Analysis (Opal)
- DESC
- Operation Evolve